

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
International conference in Havana says US hands off Cuba!
— PAGE 6-7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83/NO. 44 DECEMBER 2, 2019

Step up pace to make fall books, fund, Militant drive

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Socialist Workers Party members are stepping up the pace of the international drive to expand the readership of the *Militant* and books by revolutionary leaders that explain the program of the party in the campaign's final three weeks. An invaluable addition to this effort is promoting the new title *The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

In Lincoln, Nebraska, Joe Swanson recently sold the book to rail conductor Lance Anton. "I start by showing the photos and captions," said Swanson, "and then explain that workers need to read this book to educate ourselves and to be more confident to organize our class to fight the increasing assaults by the bosses."

Anton liked the photos and description of the fight of union workers in the late 1970s against Milwaukee Road that was cutting rail jobs by pleading bankruptcy.

Electrician Jared Hayes also bought

Continued on page 3

Bolivia protests demand end to rightists' ouster of Morales gov't

BY RÓGER CALERO

Thousands of people are protesting in Bolivia against the wave of attacks by rightist forces that led to the ouster of President Evo Morales Nov. 10. Protesters demand that self-proclaimed president Jeanine Áñez step down and Morales return from exile in Mexico. As of Nov. 20 more than 25 have been killed by police and army forces in attacks on Morales' supporters.

Amid the violence, Morales came under increasing pressure from the military high command, a mutiny by police units in several regions and a call from the country's main labor federation, and resigned.

The U.S. government and other pro-imperialist regimes from Brazil to Ecuador were quick to recognize Áñez, formerly the second vice president of the Senate. She announced herself president at a meeting of congress without a quorum, as the majority of delegates — supporters of Morales — boycotted.

The rightist protests exploded three

Continued on page 8

Back CN rail workers, Asarco strikers fights!



CBC/Meagan Fitzpatrick

Canadian National rail workers picket in Brampton, Ontario, Nov. 19, part of strike for safety.

3,200 Canadian National rail workers strike for safety

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Carrying Teamsters union placards and homemade signs saying "Strike for safety" and "We're tired of being tired," more than 3,000 Canadian National Railway train conductors, trainpersons and yard workers went on strike across the country Nov. 19, bringing Canada's largest freight carrier to a virtual halt.

The rail workers' union contract expired July 23. Canadian government-mediated talks have since failed to produce a contract in face of the bosses' drive for concessions and more profits at the expense of the health, lives and limbs of the rail workers. The workers responded with a 99.2% vote to strike.

Continued on page 9

Asarco strikers fight for union, first raise in 10 years

BY BERNIE SENTER

TUCSON, Ariz. — Solidarity for striking copper workers got a boost from a Nov. 18 rally of 150 in front of Asarco's headquarters here. The workers have been on strike since Oct. 13 at four mining complexes in Arizona and a refinery in Texas, fighting flagrant union busting by the copper giant.

Continued on page 4

Protests win stay of execution, new hearing for Rodney Reed



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

Nov. 17 action in Austin, Texas, celebrates victory, gives boost to fight to free Rodney Reed.

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

AUSTIN, Texas — "My brother's fight is not over," Rodrick Reed told the rally of some 100 people who gathered in front of the Texas governor's mansion Nov. 17. They were celebrating a stay of execution won by his brother Rodney two days earlier, five days before the state had scheduled to execute him by lethal injection.

"We are fighting for full exoneration," Reed said. "We are fighting for his free-

dom. Strap your boots up tight and get ready to fight."

The campaign to stop the execution and free Rodney Reed, who has been on death row for more than 20 years, has gained real momentum. Protests have been held at the state Capitol here and in Reed's hometown of Bastrop. Support for the case has come from state politicians from both parties and celebrities across the country, including Oprah

Continued on page 9

Democrats' impeachment drive targets working people

BY TERRY EVANS

Democrats and the liberal media have stepped up their effort to overturn the results of the 2016 presidential election. They have begun carefully stage-managed televised hearings into the CIA-initiated impeachment frame-up against President Donald Trump, claiming his efforts to push the Ukrainian government to probe corruption there are "bribery."

They say the administration withheld military aid to the Ukrainian government to pressure President Volodymyr Zelensky to look into the firing of Viktor Shokin, the Ukrainian prosecutor general, based on second-hand accounts of a phone call between

Continued on page 2

'For recognition of Israel and of a Palestinian state'

BY ROY LANDERSEN

After Israeli Defense Forces carried out a "surgical" airstrike in Gaza City Nov. 12, killing senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad commander Baha Abu al-Ata and his wife, the group responded with some 50 hours of retaliatory rocket fire. A dozen more Israeli airstrikes hit, before a cease-fire

Continued on page 9

Inside

Editorial: Support Canadian rail workers strike! 9

Hundreds protest in London, demand 'No more Grenfells' 2

Working farmers face bankruptcy, record debt 5

Hong Kong workers back students against police attacks 8

—On the picket line, p. 5—

UP rail workers speak out against job cuts, threats to safety

Hundreds protest in London, demand ‘No more Grenfells!’

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

LONDON — Hundreds joined a Nov. 14 protest marking the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire in which 72 people lost their lives. The monthly “silent marches” are called by Grenfell United, an organization of residents, their family members and others to press for “no more Grenfells.”

Nearly 40,000 people in the U.K. still live in buildings covered with flammable cladding like that west London tower block. “Nothing will happen unless we fight,” hotel worker Antonio Roncolato, who survived the fire escorted by fire-fighters from his 10th floor apartment, told the *Militant*.

“I had to come,” said Daniella Bezzi, a retired journalist from Milan, Italy. “Two young Italians perished in the blaze.” A dozen Fire Brigade Union members traveled from Northern Ireland to attend. The march ended at the “Grenfell wall” where a sign reads: “There’s no justice. There’s just us.”

A report of the first phase of an official inquiry was published days before the march. It reprimands the London Fire Brigade, especially for giving residents “stay put” advice, as the flames engulfed the building.

A second phase of the inquiry will look into the design and management of the building. A police investigation and possible criminal charges will only be considered after that.

Many of the protesters were angered by comments by Jacob Rees-Mogg, leader of the House of Commons, and Andrew Bridgen, chairman of the governing Conservative Party. Rees-

Mogg criticized residents for following the “stay put” advice, saying it would have been “common sense” to ignore it. Bridgen added that it was important that “clever people” like Rees-Mogg are running the country.

“Rees-Mogg and Bridgen’s contempt for working people is shared by all capitalist politicians,” said Jonathan Silberman, Communist League parliamentary candidate for Tottenham, who was on the march. “They’re clever. We’re stupid, or backward,” Silberman said. “The fact is Grenfell residents signaled well before the fire that the building was unsafe. Their demands were ignored by the ‘clever’ people running the borough and the country, who allow residential buildings with the same cladding and without sprinklers or adequate evacuation. This will continue until there’s workers control over building construction and safety.”

The day after the march, a student residence in Bolton, near Manchester,



Militant/Catharina Tirsén

Demonstrators protest Nov. 14 in London in one of monthly “silent marches” marking 2017 fire in Grenfell Tower where 72 people died after flammable cladding on building ignited.

also encased in flammable cladding, went up in flames. No one died.

New regulations in the name of safety create a profit-bonanza for construction firms at the expense of working people. At the Stokes Court apart-

ments for the elderly in London’s East Finchley, residents were “informed we each have to pay £7,000 for new doors (\$8,975),” by the property’s management company, resident Alan Harris, 83, told the *Militant*.

Democrats’ impeachment drive targets working class

Continued from front page
the two presidents by an anonymous CIA “whistleblower.”

Shokin was fired when then Vice President Joe Biden — the Barack Obama administration’s “point man” for Ukraine — demanded his ouster, threatening to withhold billions in aid from Washington. The prosecutor was investigating Burisma Holdings, a company that had put Biden’s son, Hunter, on its board at \$50,000 a month.

The real target of the witch hunt is the U.S. working class, who the Democrats hold responsible for the election of President Trump. They claim workers are racist and reactionary — “deplorables,” as Hillary Clinton called them — and have to be controlled. But the fact is Trump was elected by workers who had voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012, hoping to get some relief from the effects of the capitalist economic crisis. In 2016 they backed Trump for the same reason.

The public hearings were set up by weeks of private sessions, followed by leaks intended to sound damaging for the administration. The first two witnesses, U.S. Charges D’Affaires for Ukraine Bill Taylor and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent, admitted they had no firsthand knowledge of Trump’s call to Zelensky, but still shared the Democrats’ concerns about what they heard the president had said.

Their testimony got banner headlines in the *New York Times* and other papers that campaign for the president to

be impeached and indicted. The *Times* told the administration to admit its “offense.” But in fact all U.S. administrations wield Washington’s unmatched economic, military and political clout to pressure other governments to the benefit of the U.S. capitalist rulers.

Is there a Ukraine ‘affair’?

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko told the media Nov. 14 that he saw no connection between Trump’s request and the withholding of U.S. military aid. Zelensky never granted the probe Trump requested and Washington resumed its military aid to Kyiv Sept. 11.

Trump’s policy towards Ukraine is little different from the approach of the Democratic administration of Barack Obama. When Moscow seized Crimea, after the massive working-class Maidan protests brought down the subservient regime of then President Viktor Yanukovich in 2014, Obama announced Washington wouldn’t intervene because

Continued on page 4

THE MILITANT

Iraqi protests defy government, demand rights

Tens of thousands of Iraqis are demonstrating against deteriorating living conditions, intervention by both Tehran and Washington, and for political rights. The ‘Militant’ backs workers standing up against exploitation and political attacks in the Arab-Persian Gulf.

AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed
Protest in Baghdad, Nov. 3, was largest anti-government action in Iraq since 2003.

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Telephone: (212) 244-4899
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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Step up pace to make drive

Continued from front page the book. He asked Swanson what workers should do if management’s books showed the company was going broke. “Workers can say to the bosses and their government that the business should be expropriated,” said Swanson. “Their system is in crisis and workers can run the factory better through workers control.”

‘System needs an overhaul’

After knocking on Jennifer Holmes’ door in Marayong in Sydney, Australia, Nov. 16, Communist League members Baskaran Appu and Felicity Coggan were invited in for discussion. Holmes, 42, has two children and is studying part time.

“The system needs an overhaul,” she said. “I’m paying full market rent on my own. We can’t afford to go out,” she told the CL members. “Thank God for help from my parents, but they are struggling, too. They are 75 and still working, running a small business.” Appu responded that workers need to fight the way the capitalist class imposes on individual families the responsibility for providing services that should be met by society.

“Our movement has a 100-year record of building working-class parties to help lead working people to fight the capitalist class,” said Coggan. “This book is about doing that,” she said showing Holmes *The Turn to Industry*. Holmes bought the book along with *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* also by Barnes, and a subscription to the *Militant*. She took extra subscription blanks for friends and family members.

In Manchester, England, Nov. 8, Communist League members Hugo Wils and Ogmundur Jonsson were collecting signatures to put CL candidate Caroline Bellamy on the ballot in the constituency of Wythenshawe and Sale East for the country’s parliamentary election, when they met taxi driver Diyar Kamil, a Kurd from Iraq who has worked with the CL. “He signed the petition and offered to drive us around to get the final signatures needed,” wrote CL member Pete Clifford.

“The party has always supported the Kurds,” Kamil told his Kurdish friends that evening, encouraging them to sign up to get Bellamy on the ballot. “This is part of our program aimed at increasing the unity and confidence of the working class here,” Jonsson added. After helping collect the signatures, Kamil purchased a copy of *The Turn to Industry*.

To encourage greater understanding of the party’s revolutionary program, all Pathfinder books and copies of the Marxist magazine *New International* are being offered at a 20% discount until Dec. 10 when the drive ends. In addition, eight titles are offered at half price when purchased with a *Militant* subscription.

Sales at ‘Hands off Cuba’ conference

“Delegates from around the world at the ‘Hands off Cuba’ conference in Havana Nov. 1-3 bought 16 subscriptions to the *Militant* and 116 books



Communist League member Felicity Coggan, left, speaks with Jennifer Holmes Nov. 16 in Sydney, Australia. “The whole system needs an overhaul,” said Holmes, “I’m paying full market rent on my own.” She bought *Militant* subscription and *The Turn to Industry* book.

by Socialist Workers Party and other revolutionary leaders,” writes Jonathan Silberman, who participated in the event. Top sellers were *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers Power* and *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* both by Barnes; *Tribunes of the People* and *the Trade Unions*; and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters. Other titles sold includ-

ed books on the Cuban Revolution, women’s emancipation and titles by Malcolm X and Thomas Sankara. Participants bought 22 books in French.

Among those purchasing a *Militant* subscription was Rodrigo Vivanco, a recent college graduate from Santiago, Chile. “Students demonstrate during the day,” he said, describing the massive protests in that country over living standards, jobs and political rights. “Then workers getting off work in the afternoon and everyone in the evening. This is not going to end soon.”

Those wanting to join the effort to broaden the reach of the *Militant* and revolutionary books can contact the SWP or Communist League branch in your area from the page 8 directory.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester

The Cuban Revolution Shows Workers Can Win. Speaker: Jonathan Silberman, Communist League candidate for Tottenham in the parliamentary elections and participant in recent anti-imperialist solidarity conference in Cuba. Fri., Nov. 29, 7 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Office 329, 3rd floor, 3 Old Bank St. M2 7PE. Tel.: (0161) 312-8119.

Socialist Workers Party Fund Drive		
Oct. 5 - Dec. 10 (Week 6)		
Area	Quota	Collected
Albany	\$6,000	\$2,225
Atlanta	\$9,250	\$6,157
Chicago	\$11,000	\$5,089
Dallas	\$2,500	\$953
Lincoln	\$250	\$189
Los Angeles	\$10,500	\$6,296
Louisville*	\$2,800	\$1,680
Miami	\$3,500	\$2,316
New York	\$14,000	\$6,317
N. New Jersey	\$3,300	\$1,776
Oakland	\$12,000	\$7,813
Philadelphia	\$2,500	\$930
Pittsburgh*	\$2,300	\$1,500
Seattle	\$10,000	\$5,107
Twin Cities	\$4,500	\$2,120
Washington, DC	\$4,600	\$2,714
Other		\$500
Total	\$99,000	\$53,681
Should Be	\$100,000	\$66,666

*raised quota

Contribute to the 2019 Socialist Workers Party fund

In addition to winning 1,100 people to subscribe to the *Militant* and get out 1,250 books by revolutionary leaders, Socialist Workers Party members are raising \$100,000 to help finance the party’s political work. With area quotas slightly short of the national goal, party members in Pittsburgh and Louisville, Kentucky, have both raised their quotas.

Retired autoworker Lamont Anthony contributed \$50 to the Socialist Workers Party Fund, reports Jacquie Henderson from Louisville. Anthony had heard Amy Husk, the party’s candidate for Kentucky governor, speak at his church in September and since then arranged an interview for her on a local radio program. Anthony joined party members taking solidarity to striking United Auto Workers members at GM and encouraged his neighbors to find out more about the SWP.

“Several other donations have come from co-workers of party members at Walmart,” Henderson reported.

If you would like to contribute to the fund, contact the nearest SWP branch listed on page 8.

Special offer on new book

The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party

Explains the working-class program, composition, and course of conduct of the only kind of party worthy of the name ‘revolutionary’ in the imperialist epoch.

The only kind of party that can recognize the most revolutionary fact of this epoch — the worth of working people, and our power to change society when we organize and act against the capitalist class in all its economic, social, and political forms.

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— Jack Barnes, National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party

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Fall Campaign to sell Militant subscriptions and books				
Oct. 5 - Dec. 10 (Week 6)				
Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Albany	70	34	70	18
Atlanta	70	46	110	87
Chicago*	110	91	100	72
Dallas	35	32	35	23
Lincoln	12	8	15	11
Los Angeles	90	76	90	74
Louisville	60	44	60	36
Miami	25	12	25	13
New Jersey	40	32	70	55
New York	80	37	120	107
Oakland	70	53	100	76
Philadelphia	25	18	25	20
Pittsburgh	25	19	25	18
Seattle	70	55	90	51
Twin Cities	35	23	45	27
Washington	50	28	50	40
Total U.S.	867	608	1,030	728
Prisoners	25	18		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	50	35	75	44
Manchester	35	28	45	26
Total U.K.	85	63	120	70
Canada	70	43	150	77
New Zealand	20	19	20	14
Australia	25	20	35	31
Total	1,092	771	1,355	920
SHOULD BE	1,100	737	1,250	838

*Raised goal

Asarco strike fights for union

Continued from front page

“We are fighting to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect,” striker Karl Wagner told *Militant* worker-correspondents at the rally. Wagner, who has worked at the Mission mine in Sahuarita for 13 years, repairs and replaces the gigantic tires on equipment used in the open pit mine there. Ten miners from the Ray mine in Kearny and the Hayden complex, 80 miles east of Phoenix, joined the protest.

Other workers from the area joined the miners to bring support. Noe Gaxiola said he came with four fellow UPS workers “to be an example of solidarity.” Trish Muir, a Teamster who works at American Airlines, said she has brought co-workers to the picket lines. Lawrence Stewart, an aerospace worker in Phoenix and member of the United Steelworkers union, drove down for the day.

The copper strikers are organized in seven different unions based on their jobs. The largest number belong to the Steelworkers and Teamsters.

The strike has forced Asarco to shut down its concentrator and smelter in Hayden and its refinery in Amarillo, Texas, but the bosses have been doing some mining. “The company is attempting to ramp up production at the mines, but they don’t have enough manpower with those who crossed the picket line, salaried personnel and hiring replacement workers,” Alex Terrazas, president of USW Local 937, told the *Militant*.

Steelworkers Sub-District 2 Director and chief negotiator for the unions Manny Armenta told the rally about the Nov. 14 “negotiating session” with the bosses, the only one since the strike began. “It was tense, the whole [union negotiating] committee was there hoping there

would be a change in the atmosphere,” Armenta said. “Unfortunately, there wasn’t. They sat there and answered questions we had, but that was it.”

Bosses out to bust the union

Asarco clearly is out to bust the union. They’re expanding efforts to hire strike-breakers. No further negotiating sessions are planned.

Asarco bosses’ “last, best final offer” freezes pay for four more years for all but the most skilled workers, after nearly 10 years of no pay increase. Health care premiums and deductibles would double or triple. Contractual protections for union representation on the job would be gutted. Miners rejected what they call an “insulting” offer and voted 77% to go on strike.

Henry Dennison, a freight rail conductor from Seattle, spoke, bringing support on behalf of his union local. “We don’t get to pick our fights, they pick us,” he said. “The key is solidarity.”

Dennison read from the letter sent by his SMART-TD Local 324 President Pete Gushwa. “Your struggle was much discussed in our local meeting,” Gushwa wrote. “We want to reach out to say how proud we are of you all for taking a stand against the tyranny of corporate America and the oppression of the working class.” Local 324 contributed \$350 to the strikers’ food bank.

Tucson mayor-elect Regina Romero also spoke.

The *Militant*’s worker-correspondents joined 40 miners and their families at a Nov. 17 cookout at the Mission mine picket line. These have been held every Sunday since the start of the strike.

“These cuts are totally unreasonable and caused a rebellion,” haul truck driv-



Militant/Eric Simpson

Workers rally Nov. 18 in solidarity with copper workers on strike against Asarco at company headquarters in Tucson, Arizona. The miners, who struck Oct. 13, are fighting union busting.

er Jim Rushford told the *Militant*. “Asarco is a profitable company that basically forced us to strike or lay down and dissolve the union.”

U.S.-Mexico miners solidarity

Asarco is owned by Grupo Mexico, a mining conglomerate that also has operations in Argentina, Peru, Mexico, Chile, Ecuador and Spain. Strikers express a variety of opinions on whether the fact Asarco is a “foreign” corporation is the source of their problems.

Some miners and union officials said they thought so. “The problem isn’t that Grupo Mexico is Mexican based,” replied striker Eduardo Placencio. “The division isn’t over nationality. They are multinational and workers everywhere need to stand against them. The workers over there are the same as workers over here. It’s just a border between us.”

There is a history of solidarity be-

tween miners in Mexico and Arizona. In August 2005, thousands of miners in Mexico held an hourlong strike in solidarity with miners on strike against Asarco in Arizona and Texas and in Monterrey, Mexico. Nearly 50 miners from Grupo Mexico’s Cananea copper mine, 25 miles south of the border, visited the picket lines in Arizona.

Miners in Mexico also have a long history of struggle. Miners at La Cananea were on strike from 2007 to 2010, before company bosses got the help of federal police to break it.

James Wegener has worked at the Mission mine for 14 years. It’s his first strike. “Teachers have showed up, many people from the community have dropped by, some with firewood or baked goods,” he told the *Militant* at the Tucson rally. “We’re striking for people who aren’t even striking because they’ll benefit from us being out here.”

Miners and their families will celebrate Thanksgiving on Sunday, Nov. 24, with a cookout at the picket lines. Everyone is welcome.

“It’s going to be a long road ahead. We’re in it for the long haul,” said Mission striker Gregory Schuett, who is USW Local 937 financial secretary, echoing a common refrain by miners.

Join them Nov. 24. Send donations for the strike fund and food pantry to the Pima Area Labor Federation via paypal.me/palfcommunityservice. Solidarity messages to the strikers can be sent via palfchair@gmail.com.

Democrats’ impeachment drive targets working people

Continued from page 2

“Ukraine is not a member of NATO.”

Like Obama, Trump has maintained sanctions on Moscow. Unlike Obama he has authorized weapons sales to the Ukrainian government. Like all of Washington’s military “aid,” it is sent to advance the interests of the U.S. rulers. The last thing they want is a revival of struggles by workers and farmers there.

From the day Trump took office, the liberal press and the Democrats have worked ceaselessly to depose him. They organized former FBI Director William Mueller to head up a two-year-plus “investigation” into their charge that Trump colluded with Moscow to steal the election. Mueller finally had to admit he had nothing.

Now they’ve latched onto the Ukraine affair and opened the impeachment “inquiry,” less than a year before the next presidential election. Many Democrats rightly fear that if they have to contend with Trump in 2020 they stand a good chance of losing. This isn’t because workers are reactionary, but because none of the 17 Democratic presidential candidates have anything to offer.

Even the *Times* admits most workers aren’t following the hearings, but are “tuning it all out.”

Some bourgeois commentators worry that the deeply partisan impeachment drive will damage the two-party system that has served the capitalist rulers for decades. They rely on it as a way to channel working people’s discontent with governments that defend the bosses interests by offering us the “choice”

of voting for the “lesser-evil.”

“It’s hard to see how impeachment redounds to either party’s benefit,” complained *Wall Street Journal* columnist Kimberley Strassel, saying it only exacerbates declining trust in all politicians.

The methods used in the liberals’ witch hunt against the president are a danger to the working class. Their use of anonymous accusers from Washington’s spy agencies, secret hearings, smears and leaks in place of evidence,

Bakery owner who won victory against college dies

BY TERRY EVANS

David Gibson, a co-owner of Gibson’s Bakery in Oberlin, Ohio, died at his home Nov. 16. He was 65 years old and had been battling pancreatic cancer.

Gibson was a plaintiff in the family’s lawsuit earlier this year when the jury found Oberlin College liable for \$31.5 million in damages and attorneys fees for slandering the bakery owners as “racist.” It found college officials helped orchestrate protests urging a boycott of the bakery, claiming the Gibsons ran a “racist establishment with a long history of racial profiling and discrimination.” They cancelled the contract the Gibsons had to supply the college with baked goods.

“In a small city like Oberlin, having the largest business and employer against you is more than enough to seal your fate,” wrote David Gibson in a *USA Today* opinion column June 21.

The college instigated its smear cam-

paign after an Oberlin student who is Black tried to use a fake ID and shoplift bottles of wine from the Gibson’s store. When store clerk Allyn Gibson Jr. attempted to stop him, the student and two friends attacked Gibson. The students later pled guilty to attempted theft and acknowledged there was no racism involved in Gibson’s efforts to prevent the theft. Despite this, the college refused to issue a statement that the Gibsons were not racist. At trial the college’s lawyers didn’t present a shred of evidence from a single resident in the area or elsewhere to justify its racebaiting.

“The truth still matters,” David Gibson said in August, “and doing the right thing, even when it’s difficult, is important. No matter who you are or where you live.”

A Nov. 17 letter of condolence to the family on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party noted that “thousands of socialist workers over the last forty-eight years

have looked forward to dropping by Gibson’s to ... pick up baked goods, ice cream and other provisions” at the party’s annual conferences held in Oberlin.

“We celebrated, along with many in the area and beyond, your court victory against the Oberlin College administration’s efforts to defame your family’s reputation and destroy your livelihood,” SWP leaders Dave Prince, Steve Clark, both alumni of Oberlin, and Paul Mailhot and Peter Thierjung wrote in the letter.

“Today we stand with you in defending that victory against attempts by arrogant college officials to reverse the jury’s ruling,” they wrote. The college has hired even more lawyers to appeal the verdict and assert its right to slander the family.

“We’re inspired by the example David and your family have set,” the SWP leaders add. “We pledge to continue helping get out the truth in any way we can.”

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Are you involved in a union organizing drive or strike? Brought solidarity to fellow workers on the picket line? Let us know! Send articles, photos and letters to themilitant@mac.com or through our website, or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Rail workers speak out against job cuts, threats to safety

LINCOLN, Neb. — Members of International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers — known as SMART — Transportation Division Local 1409 organized an informational picket Nov. 5 in downtown Kansas City, Missouri, to tell people about how Union Pacific rail bosses are laying off workers and threatening rail safety in the area. The unionists carried signs saying, “UPRR billions of tax breaks and cutting jobs.” Over 170 local members attended.

“In the interest of the rail workers and the public, we need to organize for workers control, more inspections of trains, not less” Lance Anton, a SMART conductor here, told the *Militant*.

SMART members, conductors and locomotive engineers have been under attack by the rail bosses in their drive to boost profits and stock values through speedup, crew cuts and harassment.

Union Pacific, one of the largest Class 1 railroads in the U.S., announced layoffs of 200 workers in the Kansas City area in October. Many have a decade or more experience as carmen, workers who inspect and repair the rail cars.

Union Pacific says it is transferring nearly all its train switching operations from the Neff Yard in Kansas City, Missouri, to a rail yard in Kansas City, Kansas. UP told KSHB-TV the yard closure was “a result of our efforts to streamline operations.” In other words, to squeeze more work out of less workers. They claimed this wouldn’t affect safety, telling the TV news crew, “Union Pacific values safety above all else.”

Matt Sweeney, a UP carmen for 13 years who was laid off last month, told the TV crew covering the picket that just wasn’t true. “What would have been two guys inspecting both sides of a train and doing a thorough job, taking however much time it takes, now they’ve got one guy doing it, and he’s doing one side” of the trains, he said.

“With some of the trains carrying oil

or chemicals, lack of inspections could result in serious consequences,” Sweeney said. “If a hazmat train were to derail, you could have major issues.”

— Joe Swanson

Washington paraeducators gain teachers support, wage raise

SUMNER, Wash. — Paraeducators, who work alongside teachers in the classroom, won a pay raise after a strike Oct. 25-28 against the Sumner-Bonney Lake School District here.

The 200 workers, members of Paraeducators Associated, were joined by members of the Washington Education Association, the teachers union, on the picket lines. As a result the school board called off classes for nearly 10,000 students in all of their 14 schools.

“We have to support one another,” middle school teacher Sara Sage told the *Militant* on a solidarity march and rally Oct. 25, “because we can’t do our job without the ‘paras’ and they can’t do their job without us.”

The paraeducators union says workers’ wages were \$2-\$3 an hour below neighboring school districts. The new contract includes a wage increase of



Members of rail union SMART Transportation Division Local 1409 picket in downtown Kansas City, Missouri, Nov. 5, protesting rail bosses’ layoffs that threaten workers’ safety.

about 12.5% in 2019-20 and 2 percent the following year.

— Michele Smith

Meatpackers in Quebec strike for higher wages

PRINCEVILLE, Quebec — Some 350 meatpackers at Olymel’s pork kill and cut plant here have been on strike since Oct. 29, demanding higher wages like at other Olymel plants in Quebec. The workers are members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions.

The company’s wage offer of 40 cents per hour raise in the first year

and 30 cents for each of the next five years is “insulting,” Steve Houle, president of the CSN union at Princeville, told the *Militant*.

Bosses closed the plant in 2004 for a year and a half, and then reopened it with a wage cut of \$5.40 an hour.

On Nov. 13 strikers protested in front of the Olymel headquarters in Saint-Hyacinthe. A week earlier they demonstrated in front of the Drummondville Olymel plant, where workers recently won a wage raise after a two-hour strike.

— Lynda Little and Annette Kouri

Working farmers face bankruptcy, record debt

BY JANET POST

Because of the nature of farming under the lash of capitalist competition, almost all working farmers are forced to take out loans to keep farming. As prices for farm produce are falling today, farmers face greater difficulty getting loans as interest rates are soaring. They are “debt slaves” to the banks and other, more cutthroat, financial institutions.

Farm debt, default payments and bankruptcies are all rising. In the 12-month period ending in September there was a 24% increase in farmers filing for bankruptcy compared with the previous year, the American Farm Bureau Federation reported.

Farm debt is predicted to hit a record \$416 billion this year, up nearly 40%

since 2012. This year record spring rains meant nearly 464,000 acres were left unplanted and the fall harvest has been slowed by sub-freezing temperatures and snow. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that median farm income was a *negative* \$1,548 in 2018.

As banks back away from lending, especially to smaller family farmers, many are being forced to turn to alternative lending sources outside of traditional banks, such as financial service firms Ag Resource Management, Fora Financial and FarmOp Capital. They profit from charging interest rates double that of the banks and put more stringent monitors on farmers’ production.

One way these vulture financial services companies try to guarantee get-

ting paid is to use crop sales or insurance policies as collateral, rather than land or equipment. They extract hefty payments through automatic withdrawals from farmers’ accounts and put liens on each bushel of grain.

FarmOp Capital tracks crop growth with satellites and has production data transmitted to them from farmers’ machinery to monitor potential problems.

One Arkansas farmer, 32-year-old Heath Jobe, borrowed \$118,000 at 9% interest from ARM for seed, chemicals and fuel. But after his rice, beans and corn were hurt by a year of dry weather, ARM turned him down for a new loan and he ended up in bankruptcy. “If you don’t make a crop and you have a bad year, they’ll clean your clock,” Jobe told the *Wall Street Journal*.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 5, 1994

HAVANA, Cuba — In a show of solidarity with the Cuban revolution unprecedented since the 1960s, nearly 3,000 delegates from 110 countries have gathered here for the World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba.

“Your presence here makes us stronger to defend our independence, our national identity, and our Cuban socialism,” said Ricardo Alarcón, president of the National Assembly.

“We draw on the dignity and the common will of all Cuban patriots to defend the revolution,” Alarcón said. “But we also count on you. We count on your solidarity and the confidence it gives us that for millions of people across the face of this planet Cuba’s battle is their own. The Cuban revolution has had to adapt to a changing world but we will never surrender to imperialism, we will never betray our principles.”



December 5, 1969

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — Nearly 5,000 demonstrators marched to the courthouse here and held a rally to protest the brutal treatment of 14 members of the Connecticut Black Panther Party, who have been imprisoned since May. The demonstration was joined by busloads from New York and Boston.

The “Connecticut 14” are charged with conspiracy and murder of Panther organizer Alex Rackley. The police claim the Panthers killed Rackley because he was a police agent. The Panthers deny the charge and have stated that “Alex Rackley was and will always be considered a member in good standing of the Black Panther Party.”

The demonstration centered around the treatment of the seven women Panthers. They are being held in jail without bail and have been denied their legal right to choice of counsel.



December 2, 1944

In one of the most militant and dramatic strike actions since Pearl Harbor, thousands of women switchboard operators and other employees of the gigantic anti-labor American Telegraph and Telephone trust threw picket lines around telephone exchange buildings throughout Ohio, in Detroit and the government war center, Washington, D.C.

Until it was suddenly halted on orders of union officials, the strike threatened to sweep like wildfire to key communications centers in all parts of the nation. Starting in Dayton, Nov. 17, when some 600 women operators struck in protest against intolerable wages and working conditions, the strike quickly spread.

Everywhere their picket lines were respected by union maintenance men. Union workers in Chicago, Philadelphia and New York were also threatening to join the strike when it was called off.

Dean Foods bankruptcy

Dairy farmers have been especially hard hit financially. The number of dairy farms has dropped by more than 93% since 1970 — from more than 640,000 to some 40,000 today.

Dean Foods, the largest milk processor in the country, declared bankruptcy Nov. 12. The Dallas-based company has some 60 dairy processing plants in 29 states and employs 15,000 workers.

“Overproduction” of milk — an essential food stuff badly needed by millions of people worldwide — is used to drive down the price farmers receive on the market. Dairy farmers’ income is below their costs of production. “One of the most pressing issues posed by Dean Food’s bankruptcy is the possibility that farmers won’t be able to find anywhere else to sell their product,” the New Food Economy website said the next day.

Retailers like Walmart, Kroger and Albertsons have opened their own in-house milk processing plants, cutting out middlemen like Dean Foods. They buy mostly from larger, capitalist farmers to lower their costs.

International conference in Havana says ‘US hands off Cuba!’

Cuba will ‘never yield to US pressure or stop showing solidarity’ with those who resist imperialism

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN
HAVANA — “For showing solidarity, and being consistent with our history of struggle and sacrifice, for being a sister and companion of peoples who resist, Cuba is condemned and sanctioned beyond limit,” said Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez. He was speaking here at the closing session of an international “Hands off Cuba” conference held Nov. 1-3.

“Our country today suffers a criminal tightening of the blockade,” Díaz-Canel said. Washington is expanding use of the Helms-Burton Act, “which persecutes and sanctions third countries” that trade and have banking ties with Cuba. He called attention “to harassment, persecution and sanctions on countries, companies and ships that participate in transporting fuel.”

But the Cuban people and government “will never yield” to pressure by the U.S. government, nor give up their internationalist assistance to Venezuela and other countries around the world, the Cuban president said.

The event, organized in response to Washington’s stepped-up economic sanctions and threats against the Cuban Revolution, drew more than 1,300 delegates from 86 countries across the Americas, Africa, Europe and Asia. It was called by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) and the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC).

The conference brought together an array of participants. These included trade union delegations from Trinidad, Panama, Brazil, France and other countries, as well as workers and students involved in the current social explosions in Chile, Ecuador and Haiti. Also participating were members of solidarity groups from the U.S. and Canada; activists in the fight to legalize a woman’s right to choose abortion in Argentina; and present and former government ministers from countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Joining Díaz-Canel on the platform at the closing session were Raúl Castro, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, and other high-ranking Cuban leaders, as well as Venezuelan President



Conference close featured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro; Raúl Castro, first secretary Communist Party of Cuba; and Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel. From left, Fernando González, president Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples; Teresa Amarelle, general secretary Federation of Cuban Women; Monica Valente, secretary general Sao Paulo Forum; José Ramón Machado Ventura, Communist Party of Cuba; Maduro; Castro; Díaz-Canel; Esteban Lazo, president Cuba’s National Assembly; Ulises Guillarte, general secretary Central Organization of Cuban Workers; Socorro Gomes, president World Peace Council.

Nicolás Maduro. Maduro’s presence was an affirmation of the Cuban leadership’s refusal to break its ties of solidarity in face of the U.S.-led assaults on Venezuelan sovereignty.

Stepped-up U.S. attacks

The U.S. government and its allies are waging a propaganda war, Díaz-Canel said, to try to rationalize Washington’s attacks. Capitalist spokespeople falsely blame the Cuban and Venezuelan governments for mass protests in Chile and Ecuador. But it’s the capitalist system and the U.S. and other imperialist rulers that cause the economic and social disaster generating these upheavals.

Replying to Washington’s “crude lies,” Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez told the opening session that what the U.S. rulers and their capitalist allies in the region are really concerned about is “the example of the Cuban Revolution.”

Also addressing the opening plenary was ICAP President Fernando González. González was one of five Cuban revolutionaries, “the Cuban Five,” imprisoned in the U.S. for up to 16 years for their work to defend Cuba

from U.S.-backed terror attacks.

Both he and Rodríguez described the escalation of the U.S. economic war against the Cuban Revolution, including full implementation of the Helms-Burton Act for the first time since it was signed into law in 1996 by President William Clinton. Washington is now applying the law’s Title III, which allows U.S. citizens to sue third-country as well as Cuban individuals and companies who they allege have connections to property nationalized for the benefit of the Cuban people. The aim is to stop businesses in Canada, Europe and elsewhere from maintaining trade, transportation and financial ties with Cuba.

Rodríguez denounced expanded U.S. restrictions on trade with Cuba, including on ships visiting the island, which is cutting income from tourism and slowing oil imports. In recent months Cuba has faced severe difficulties in acquiring fuel, which affects industrial and domestic power supplies, he said. Lines of cars and trucks outside gas stations confirm the impact.

González responded to Washington’s campaign of smears against Cuba’s medical assistance to countries around the world. Today some 29,000 Cuban doctors, nurses and other medical volunteers work in 65 countries.

During the opening plenary discussion, Cuban delegate Enrique Ubieta noted such international solidarity is the product of the transformation of millions of Cubans brought about by a deep-going socialist revolution. Ubieta is the author of *Red Zone*, a book about the more than 250 Cuban volunteer doctors, nurses and other health workers who successfully led the 2014-15 fight to end the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

Delegates hosted in Barbosa

Ubieta’s point about the character of the Cuban Revolution was brought home at a social event and concert for conference participants hosted by the Committees for the Defense of

the Revolution in Havana’s working-class housing complex of Barbosa. The CDRs are neighborhood organizations that involve millions of working people in Cuba. CDR members prepared food and drinks for the delegates, inviting us into their homes and engaging in street corner discussions.

Roberto Guerra told us the 54-building Barbosa complex was constructed by volunteer work brigades in the 1980s and that he was one of the brigadistas. His son José said current shortages of fuel and articles of personal hygiene are the result of the tightened imperialist squeeze. There are real difficulties, he said, but Washington underestimates the resilience of Cuban working people.

Pointing from his fourth-floor balcony to neighbors below mingling with international visitors, José said, “Where else in the world would you find such an expression of solidarity and resistance?”

Solidarity with Cuban Revolution

On the second day of the conference, delegates broke down into six commissions. One of the largest, attended by some 350 delegates, was on “Solidarity

with Cuba and other just causes.” It was held at the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM). In the 20 years since its founding, the school has graduated nearly 30,000 doctors from 105 countries. Today 1,200 foreign students from 80 countries are receiving free, quality medical training there.

The international delegates were welcomed by hundreds of ELAM students who lined the sidewalk. Students organized an evening musical show and took part in the opening and closing sessions.

Cuban Health Minister José Ángel Portal spoke of Cuba’s medical collaboration around the world, including in the fight against Ebola; Cuba’s medical aid to countries devastated by natural disasters from Pakistan to Haiti; and the medical care given to 25,000 children affected by radiation in the Chernobyl nuclear explosion in Ukraine.

Delegates then took part in regional workshops. The North America meeting was chaired by ICAP’s Yamil Martínez. Participants discussed plans for activities that include ongoing



Nov. 1-3 conference in Havana was attended by 1,300 delegates from 86 countries.



Cuban internationalists aid Ebola patient in Liberia in 2015. Some 250 Cuban volunteer doctors, nurses and other health workers led successful 2014-15 fight to end epidemic in West Africa.

ing monthly solidarity actions in Canada and Quebec; celebrations in early December to mark the fifth anniversary of the freeing of the last of the Cuban Five; and a March 2020 North American conference in New York City against the embargo. In his opening remarks, Martínez also called attention to solidarity brigades to Cuba planned this coming spring and summer. Other workshops discussed coordinated plans for their regions.

At the North America meeting, Estela Vazquez, a vice president of Local 1199 of the health workers union and member of New York’s Cuba Si Coalition, pointed to the current up-tick in workers’ struggles in the U.S. They present an opening to reach more people with the truth about the Cuban Revolution, she said.

Party administrations.

This issue was also addressed in the final conference plenary. After a draft Action Plan had been read, a delegate from Puerto Rico proposed dropping a sentence calling for “No more Trump.” The brutalities of U.S. colonial rule in Puerto Rico have been carried out equally under Democratic and Republican administrations, said Aleida Centeno of the Nationalist Party. It was President Barack Obama who imposed the belt-tightening “fiscal control” board on Puerto Rico, for example, she said. The declaration should say, “No more U.S. imperialism!”

Social and political crisis

“I feel it’s my duty to state that difficult times lie ahead,” Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez said at the opening plenary. Discussion of the social and political crisis wracking Latin America ran throughout the conference.

Conference participants unanimously condemned hostile intervention and measures by Washington against sovereign governments in Venezuela, Bolivia and elsewhere.

In assessing prospects to advance the goals of the conference, some delegates argued that the key today is better use of “social media.” Speaking at a commission on “Decolonization and Cultural War,” panelist Amauri Chamorro raised a note of caution.

“We can’t substitute for the need to go door to door, to engage in one-on-one dialog with people,” Chamorro, a former chief of communications for past Ecuadoran President Rafael Correa, said. “We can’t fool ourselves into thinking that elections were won or lost because of good or bad ‘commu-



Committees for the Defense of the Revolution in Havana’s working-class Barbosa housing complex welcome delegates to “Hands off Cuba” conference Nov. 1, inviting them into their homes. “Where else in the world would you find such an expression of solidarity and resistance,” said a Barbosa resident.

What working people can learn from Cuba’s socialist revolution

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Bolivia protests hit gov't ouster

Continued from front page
weeks earlier following Morales' disputed victory for a fourth term in the Oct. 20 presidential election. After losing a February 2016 referendum to amend the constitution to allow him to run again, Morales got a court to overturn the prohibition.

Morales, Bolivia's first indigenous president, came to office in 2006 with 54 percent of the popular vote, following massive protests that he helped lead, vowing to reverse centuries of exploitation and discrimination against the nation's majority Quechua and Aymara indigenous population.

Under his tenure Morales and his party, the Movement Towards Socialism, initiated government welfare and infrastructure programs that improved conditions for the poorest sections of the working class and small farmers, won passage of a new constitution that made Bolivia a secular state with no official religion, and codified indigenous rights.

He developed fraternal relations with Cuba's revolutionary leadership and invited over 700 Cuban internationalist health care workers to provide treatment in the most isolated areas of Bolivia.

At the same time, Morales' promoted agreements with foreign and domestic capitalists to exploit the country's hydrocarbon, mining and agricultural resources, at times over the objection of his own supporters who saw this as a violation of the rights of indigenous communities. But foreign and domestic capitalists alike never ceased seeing in the Morales government and the as-

pirations of the popular forces that supported him a threat to their economic and political interests.

Following the contested presidential election, Bolivia's far right, led by wealthy businessman Luis Fernando Camacho, whipped up accusations of fraud and calls to annul it. The pro-Washington Organization of American States — which Morales had invited to review the elections — said the vote was marked by widespread irregularities.

Violent attacks by rightists

Camacho's supporters launched violent attacks against Morales' supporters and members of his government. Patricia Arce, mayor of Vinto, from Morales's party was attacked by right-wing thugs who set fire to the local government office, then cut her hair and paraded her through town covered in red paint.

While claiming her "only objective" is to hold new elections as soon as possible, Ñez — often flanked by Camacho — wasted no time in attacking the rights of working people and indigenous communities. She replaced the top military brass, cabinet ministers and the heads of state-owned companies. She granted immunity to police and army from prosecution. Within hours, cops and soldiers attacked Morales' supporters trying to enter Cochabamba, leaving nine dead.

"During 13 years we have lived under what they are calling a dictatorship," said Aymara indigenous leader Gonzalo Quenallata, yet "in full democracy, in less than a week there has been more than 25 killed" by the new government.

Moves against Cuba, Venezuela

Ñez immediately joined U.S. imperialism's ongoing drive to isolate the governments of Cuba and Venezuela. She recognized pro-imperialist opposition leader Juan Guaidó as Venezuelan president and expelled Venezuela's diplomats from Bolivia. Her new foreign minister announced Bolivia will leave the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA). The alliance is a Latin America and Caribbean alternative to trade pacts and political bodies dominated by Washington that is led by Cuba and Venezuela.

Right-wing forces in Bolivia were emboldened by the defeat in recent years of a number of governments that had friendly relations with Cuba, including in Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay and El Sal-

Hong Kong workers back students against police attacks



South China Morning Post/Nora Tam

While international media attention has focused on clashes between students and riot police, thousands of office and other workers flooded the streets in downtown Hong Kong in daily lunchtime actions. These demonstrations in support of the protest movement, like the one above, Nov. 8, have paralyzed much of the city. "Driven by anger at the authorities' response to massive protests," the Hong Kong Free Press said Nov. 16, "and guilt that the burden of defending democracy has fallen on the city's youth — a white-collar rebellion is rippling across Hong Kong."

The city government of the semi-autonomous financial hub, more and more openly controlled by the oppressive regime in Beijing, has failed to subdue five months of sometimes millions-strong mobilizations aimed at greater political rights. Standing reality on its head, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam called the protesters "enemies of the people." She has denied permits for peaceful rallies while stepping up violent police attacks on protests.

For the first time, thousands of college and high school students occupied the five main university campuses Nov. 12. Many people gave them supplies or shielded them from arrest, but four sites were violently cleared by riot police. Protesters at Polytechnic University in Kowloon held out, supporting barricades blocking the Cross Harbor Tunnel to Hong Kong Island. "Yesterday, the students and protesters tried to leave," Daniel Chan reported to the *Militant* Nov. 18 from Hong Kong. The police used tear gas and rubber bullets "to prevent them from leaving" unless they submitted to arrest.

— ROY LANDERSEN

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vador. And by Washington's moves to step up its economic war against Cuba and attacks on the Nicolás Maduro government in Venezuela.

In a serious provocation Nov. 13 in El Alto, outside La Paz, the Ñez regime arrested four members of Cuba's medical brigade. Echoing Washington's most extreme anti-Cuba rhetoric, Ñez slandered the internationalist volunteers, calling them "so-called" doctors and falsely accusing them of fomenting the protests against her.

Given the threats, the Cuban government decided to withdraw the volunteer

brigade. "We stayed at our posts, supporting the health of our sister Bolivian people until the last possible moment," surgeon Nirza García Valdés told *Granma* upon her return to Cuba. "No regime, no coup, can erase the results of what we have accomplished."

The indignation provoked by Ñez's power grab sparked broad protests, including by many who have criticized aspects of Morales' policies and actions. Protesters have set up blockades on major highways leading to La Paz. Unable to bring in food or gas by land, the new regime has been flying in supplies.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: Suite 22, 10 Bridge St., Granville, NSW 2142. Tel: (02) 8677 0108. Email: cl_australia@optusnet.com.au

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QUEBEC: **Montreal:** 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. Email: clcmontreal@fastmail.com

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Support Canadian rail workers strike!

All workers have a stake in backing the strike waged by unionists at Canadian National Railway against bosses’ attempts to cut rest periods, increase overtime and continue dangerous remote control operations in rail yards. Use the *Militant’s* coverage to let your co-workers, family and friends, your union or other groups you’re active in, know why these workers are fighting and what we can do together to support them. Send messages of solidarity and, if you can, visit their picket lines.

Over 3,000 train conductors, trainpersons and yard workers face the howling chorus from the bosses across industry demanding the government act as a strikebreaker by declaring the rail workers’ fight “illegal” and try to force them back to work.

Anti-working-class laws like those in Canada that give the government the right to ban strikes — and similar laws that cover workers in rail, airlines and other industries the bosses’ designate as “essential” in the U.S. — need to be fought.

The bosses’ push to make rail workers toil for even longer hours and to make it more difficult for workers to take time off are a serious threat to the safety of both

the workers and those who live near the tracks.

Rail workers across North America confront ongoing moves by the bosses to slash crew sizes and run longer and longer trains to cut jobs and boost profits. This leads to more derailments, injuries and deaths.

In standing up to Canadian National bosses, Teamster rail workers are fighting for working people in communities who live near the tracks, who face devastation when derailments occur. A 72-car oil train derailed and exploded in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, killing 47 people in the town in 2013.

The latest assault on working conditions by CN bosses underlines why workers need to organize and use our unions to wage a fight for workers control over production and safety at the factories, mines, railways and energy monopolies where we work. In rail, this fight goes hand in hand with demands for four-person crews and no trains over 50 cars in length.

This fight being waged by Teamster rail members takes place at the same time copper workers in Arizona and Texas are locked in a tough battle against union busting by Asarco. Build solidarity and weigh in on these two important struggles!

Canadian National rail workers strike for safety

Continued from front page

The walkout is the first strike on Canadian National in a decade.

Among the concessions the bosses demand are reduced rest periods and increases in the amount of time workers can be forced to work overtime during a shift. They want to make it harder for workers to take time off.

Use of dangerous remote control operations in rail yards is another major safety issue. The union is fighting CN bosses forcing workers to hang on “to moving trains with one hand while operating a remotely controlled locomotive with the other.”

The company is demanding other concessions, including a lifetime cap on prescription drug coverage.

The day before the strike deadline Canadian National bosses announced they plan to cut 1,600 jobs — both office and union — out of its North American workforce of 24,000. The union rejected CN’s demands for binding arbitration and pressure from government officials not to strike. The two sides are continuing to negotiate in Montreal.

“We’re tired of working tired,” Teamsters Canada Rail Conference spokesman Daniel Walter told Canadian Broadcasting reporters on the picket line in Calgary Nov. 19. “We’re constantly hauling dangerous products through highly populated areas, and

we need to be rested. All this while CN made over \$3.8 billion last quarter.”

The federal Transportation Safety Board said fatigue was a major safety problem in 90 investigations of derailments and other incidents it has conducted since 1992. Striking rail workers are saying, “Enough is enough.”

Fifty percent of all merchandise in Canada moves by rail. Canadian bosses’ outfits like the Chemistry Industry Association and the Mining Association are pressing Justin Trudeau’s Liberal Party-led government to order rail workers back to work. The bosses’ demands are backed by the provincial governments in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Some grain is being moved by management personnel, but thousands of additional tons are stuck in storage.

Western Canadian governments, oil bosses and others demand Trudeau cut off the strike.

Three strikes by rail workers on the Canadian Pacific — the country’s second largest freight carrier — since 2012 were halted when the government enacted or threatened back-to-work legislation.

Trudeau’s minority government rules with support from the New Democratic Party, which says it will not support legislation to end the strike. His party lost the popular vote in the country and was routed in the west in the Oct. 21 federal elections.

Protests win stay, new hearing for Rodney Reed

Continued from front page

Winfrey, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz and many more.

The public campaign forced the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals to block the execution and send Reed’s case back to Bastrop County, where he was originally tried, to examine new evidence.

“We had witnesses that were intimidated, but now it’s a new day,” Sandra Reed, Rodney’s mother, told KEYE-TV. “The truth will and shall set him free.”

“I see people here today that have been active in this case for decades and I see a lot of new faces,” Randi Hensley from The Abolitionist organization told the rally. “What you did matters.”

Carmen Pagliari told the *Militant* that she “heard about this case a month ago and began to read about it and got more passionate for justice for Reed,” she said. “I have always been against the death penalty.”

End the death penalty!

“My brother Luis Castro Perez is on death row for something he didn’t do,” Delia Perez Meyer told the crowd. “Thank you for being part of this fight for Rodney Reed. There have been 565 executions [since 1982] in Texas, we don’t want any more.”

There are now 217 inmates in Texas on death row.

“The district attorney must not keep continuing to play political football to keep this man incarcerated,”

Mark Clements, who won his freedom after being framed up by Chicago cops and spending years in prison, told the crowd.

Reed, who is African American, was convicted by an all-white jury in 1998 for the rape and murder two years earlier of 19-year-old Stacey Stites, a cashier in Bastrop. Reed, who was seeing Stites, has always maintained his innocence. There is growing evidence that Stites was killed by former cop Jimmy Fennell Jr.

The state has repeatedly refused to order DNA testing of the belt that was used to strangle Stites and other crime scene evidence. “Test the DNA” is a popular chant at protests demanding Reed be freed.

Gerardo Sanchez Corona, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Texas, attended the Nov. 17 action.

“The case of Rodney Reed is one more example of how the rulers use the death penalty to scare working people,” Sanchez Corona said to applause at a Nov. 14 protest. “They don’t have any solutions to the economic, moral and political crisis of the capitalist system. The rulers fear the working class when we stand up and fight. This is why we need to build the labor movement and continue the fight to abolish the death penalty and free Rodney Reed.”

Another round of actions demanding Rodney Reed’s exoneration were announced for Dec. 22.

Israel, Palestinian state

Continued from front page

was brokered by Egyptian and U.N. officials.

For the first time, Tel Aviv targeted only this smaller Islamist group, avoiding attacks on Hamas, the bourgeois Islamist force which administers the Gaza Strip. Hamas fighters also initially stayed on the sidelines.

Tel Aviv was trying to widen bitter divisions between Hamas, in charge of Gaza and under pressure from the rulers in Egypt and Qatar, and Islamic Jihad, reliant on the bourgeois clerical rulers in Iran. The counterrevolutionary regime in Tehran swears it will wipe Israel — and its people — “off the map.”

For the first time in six months Hamas officials called off what have been weekly violent protests along the border fence with Israel.

The 2 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have lived under severe trade restrictions for 12 years imposed by Tel Aviv with the collaboration of Egyptian authorities. Half the population is under 18, a third of whom are unemployed. Hamas maintains its rule by dispensing aid obtained primarily from Qatar’s rulers.

The truce was disrupted by more rockets fired Nov. 14, followed by Israeli retaliation. The IDF blamed Hamas for 10 missiles fired from Gaza City the next day and bombed three Hamas compounds.

A Nov. 13 Israeli strike killed a sheep-herding family of eight. The government admitted the “mistake” as it was meant to hit another Islamic Jihad commander.

Islamic Jihad launched 450 rockets. Most misfired or were taken out by Israel’s Iron Dome missile defenses. Some did hit populated areas, causing scores of injuries, but no fatalities. Israeli retaliation in Gaza has killed 34 people and injured 111.

Political foes of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused him of starting hostilities — with the inevitable Islamist rocket retaliation guaranteed to lead to a surge of support for further military action at home — to cobble together a government. Despite two elections in Israel this year, neither Netanyahu nor his opponents have been able to form a majority bloc.

In the Sept. 17 election, Netanyahu’s party won 32 Knesset seats out of a total of 120. That is one behind the Blue and White party, led by his main rival, Benny Gantz. Neither has been able to form a government.

Seeking to rally support, Netanyahu said Nov. 16 that the country faces a “historic danger to Israel’s security” if Gantz were to get a majority with the support of representatives elected on the Joint List, a coalition of Arab parties, the third largest faction in the Knesset.

Joint List Chairman Ayman Odeh responded, telling Netanyahu, “The Arab and Jewish citizens are more important than you.”

The working-class road forward

The Socialist Workers Party 2017 statement “For Recognition of a Palestinian State and of Israel” points a way forward out of this seemingly endless fighting. It starts from the “political necessity for the Israeli and Arab governments and leaderships of Palestinian organizations to begin immediate talks to recognize both Israel and an independent Palestinian state.”

“Such an agreement must recognize the right of Jews everywhere to take refuge in Israel in face of the global rise of Jew-hatred and anti-Semitic violence, as well as the unconditional right of the dispossessed Palestinian people to a contiguous, sovereign homeland.”

It points to the history of imperialist domination in the region, including the “ruthless colonial and national oppression across the Arab and Muslim countries, as well as the genocidal crimes of the Holocaust, the murderous pogroms preceding it across Eastern and Central Europe and Russia, and the enduring reality of Jew-hatred in today’s crises-ridden capitalist world.”

The statement’s starting point is “the class interests and solidarity of workers and toiling farmers across the Middle East — be they Palestinian, Jewish, Arab, Kurdish, Turkish, Persian or otherwise, and whatever their religious or other beliefs — as well as working people in the United States and around the world.”

“We are *for* whatever helps working people organize and act together,” the SWP says, “to advance our demands and struggles against the capitalist governments and ruling classes that exploit and oppress us.

“We are *for* whatever renews class solidarity and self-confidence, advancing us along a revolutionary course toward a united struggle for workers power.”